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Detailed Studies of Chemical Reaction Kinetics

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by

E.F. Greene and J. Ross

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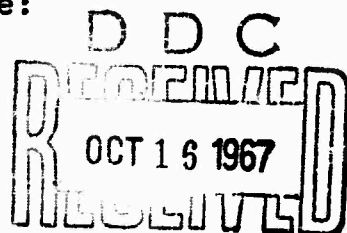
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For the past four years at Brown University the Advanced Research Projects Agency has been supporting research directed toward providing a clearer understanding of the details of the kinetics of chemical reactions. The purpose of this research has been to find out more exactly how chemical reactions occur. The work has been both theoretical and experimental, involving molecular beam and shock wave techniques.

The major part of the experimental work has been directed to measuring the scattering of velocity selected beams of alkali metal atoms by crossed beams of various target molecules, both reactive and non-reactive ones. The direct, experimental results are differential cross sections for non-reactive scattering which can be interpreted to yield: (for all systems studied)

- 1) Numerical values of parameters in an assumed form of the interaction potential for the reactants; and (for the reactive systems)
- 2) the probability of reaction as it varies with impact parameter or the potential energy at the distance of closest approach during a collision; 3) the magnitude and energy dependence of the total reaction cross section; 4) threshold energies for reaction and the maximum distance of separation of the reactants for which reaction can occur. These results have been obtained from studies of potassium scattered by HCl, HBr, DBr, HI, CH₃Br, CH₃I, CCl₄, CBr₄, SiCl₄, SnCl₄, SF₆, C(CH₃)₄, (CH₃)₂C=C(CH₃)₂, benzene, and cyclohexane, Br₂, adamantane, (CH₃)₃CBr, C₃Br, and (NC)₂C=C(CN)₂ and of Cs scattered by HBr. The more reactive systems such as K + SnCl₄ or SF₆ have reaction cross sections of the order of 10^2 \AA^2 . These remarkably large values show that chemical reaction can not always be considered a small perturbation on elastic scattering.

Other experiments have been carried out with an Ar atom beam in a higher energy range (20-200eV). The fast beam is produced by ionization of Ar followed by acceleration and then neutralization of the ions. This beam has been used for studies of the reaction $\text{Ar} + \text{CsF} \rightarrow \text{Ar} + \text{Cs} + \text{F}$ (for which no products were detected above the noise level) and $\text{Ar} + \text{Ar} \rightarrow \text{Ar}^+ + \text{Ar} + \text{e}$. Results from this kind of experiment help to clarify the nature of the interactions of atoms at these higher energies.

An apparatus has been built for the study cross sections for inelastic transitions. An alkali beam passes through a velocity selector, is scattered by a cross beam, and is velocity analyzed before detection. Clear cut measurements of energy transfer between translation and internal energy on collision should soon become possible.

An experiment with similar objectives was carried out in a shock tube with the system HI diluted with Ar. The rate of energy transfer from translation to the three lowest vibrational quantum states of HI was measured. The exchange of vibrational quanta between HI molecules apparently occurs with a high probability. Other shock tube experiments have helped to show how two Br atoms, produced from heating Br_2 or HBr , may recombine on collision with the emission of a photon.

The theoretical work has also been directed toward providing a clearer understanding of the nature of inelastic and chemically reactive collisions. Particular results have been 1) a theoretical justification of the empirical method used for interpreting the

data from the nonreactive scattering experiments, 2) a semiclassical theory for the rotational excitation of a diatomic molecule by an atom, 3) a quantum mechanical calculation of a reaction cross section for $K + HBr$, 4) an application of R-matrix theory for the derivation of both an activated complex theory and a statistical theory of chemical reaction rates, and to resonances expected in low energy elastic scattering, 5) evaluation of scattering cross sections in the optical model. These results help not only in understanding the experimental results but also in showing what new experiments may be useful.

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4. R.J. Suplinskas, "Calculation of the chemical reaction cross section; K + HBr", June 1965.
5. B.C. Eu, "R-matrix theory for elastic and reactive molecular scattering", June 1966.

Scientific Personnel Supported

Graduate students (degrees received, if any)

C.C. Chow (Ph.D. 1964)
B.C. Eu (Ph.D. 1966)
R. Hammond
M.H. Lau
M.W. Lee
A.L. Moursund (Ph.D. 1964)
R.J. Suplinskas (Ph.D. 1965)
T.C. Wang
K. Westberg
C.H. Williams, Jr. (Ph.D. 1964)

Postdoctoral research associates

J.R. Airey
J.M.S. Henis
L.F. Hoffman
K. Koder
K. Lawley
S. Miyazaki
G.P. Reck
J.L.J. Rosenfeld

Principal investigators

E.F. Greene
J. Ross

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